

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 30, 2007

The Honorable Jeff Bingaman
Chairman
Senate Committee on Energy
and Natural Resources
304 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Pete V. Domenici
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Energy
and Natural Resources
304 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Bingaman and Ranking Member Domenici:

We are writing to express our support for the inclusion of a strong renewable portfolio standard (RPS) in energy legislation that emerges from the Energy and Natural Resources Committee.

An RPS requires retail electric utilities to include a specific percentage of renewable energy in their generation portfolios, or to purchase credits from other utilities that generate renewable energy. This market-based mechanism will promote the production and consumption of electricity generated with renewable resources such as wind, solar, biomass and geothermal. Such a standard has been passed by the Senate three times, in H.R. 4 from the 107th Congress, and in H.R. 6 in both the 108th and 109th Congresses.

Enactment of a strong RPS would provide several very real benefits. An RPS will promote fuel diversity and reduce our substantial dependence on natural gas, an increasing share of which will need to be imported in the future. This will ease shortages and prevent price spikes in our natural gas supplies. An RPS will also encourage on-site generation of renewable energy. On-site generation, also known as distributed generation, will help ease pressure on the centralized grid and will reduce the impact if grid disruptions should occur. In addition, as the Department of Energy's own Energy Information Administration has noted on several occasions, an RPS would have a negligible impact on consumer energy costs. In fact, residential and industrial consumer natural gas costs would decline as a result of an RPS.

Finally, increasing the market share for renewable energy resources will have substantial environmental benefits. It will reduce nitrogen oxide, sulfur dioxide and mercury emissions from the utility sector, as well as the emission of greenhouse gases. An RPS will enable utilities to more easily meet their current and future Clean Air Act requirements, while enhancing public health.


There is broad support for a federal RPS. During the 108th Congress, the Senate's version of H.R. 6 included a RPS provision. Although fifty-two Senators voted to add an RPS provision to the Energy Policy Act of 2005, an RPS was not included in the final conference language. In addition, twenty states and the District of Columbia are moving forward with their own renewable portfolio standards.

It is time for the Senate to enact a strong federal RPS to ensure that regional renewable energy markets develop more efficiently. We strongly encourage the Energy and Natural Resources Committee to include a RPS in legislation that is reported out of the committee.

Sincerely,



Senator Richard J. Durbin


Senator Olympia Snowe


Senator Harry Reid


Senator John F. Kerry


Senator Maria Cantwell



Senator Joseph R. Biden, Jr.


Senator Barack Obama


Senator Bernard Sanders

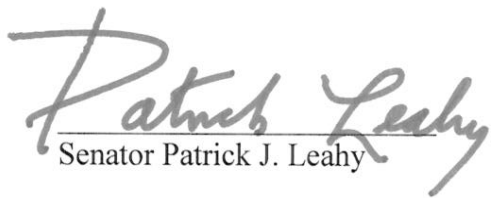

Senator Byron L. Dorgan


Senator Jack Reed


Senator Christopher J. Dodd


Senator Russell D. Feingold


Senator Carl Levin


Senator Patrick J. Leahy


Senator Blanche L. Lincoln

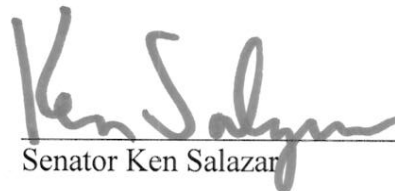

Senator Benjamin L. Cardin


Senator Ron Wyden

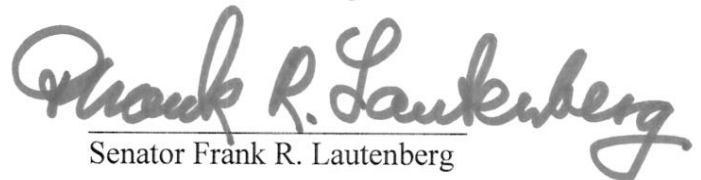

Senator Patty Murray


Senator Jon Tester


Senator Herb Kohl

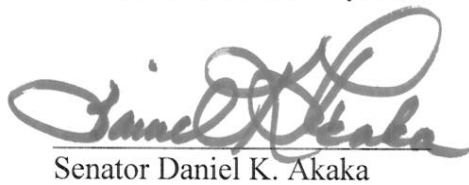

Senator Ken Salazar

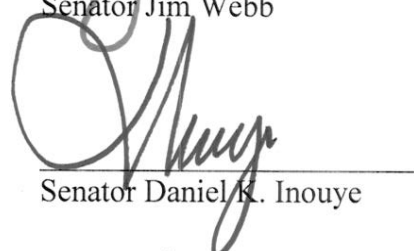

Senator Evan Bayh

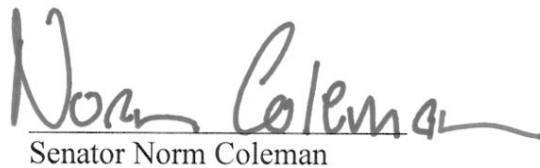

Senator Frank R. Lautenberg


Senator Robert P. Casey, Jr.


Senator Jim Webb


Senator Daniel K. Akaka


Senator Daniel K. Inouye


Senator Norm Coleman


Senator Claire McCaskill


Senator Joseph I. Lieberman

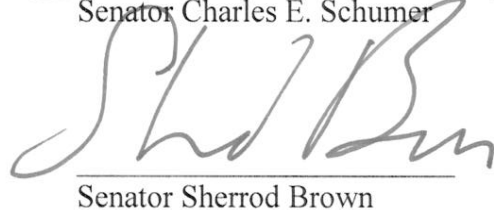

Senator Tom Harkin


Senator Edward M. Kennedy


Senator Barbara A. Mikulski


Senator Kent Conrad

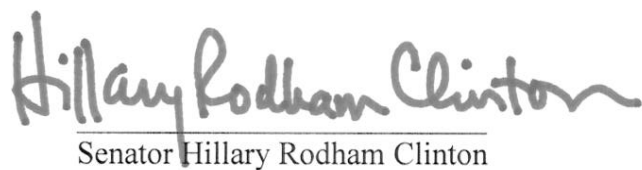

Senator Charles E. Schumer


Senator Sherrod Brown


Senator Robert Menendez

*RPS
letter to
ENR*

Senator Arlen Specter


Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton

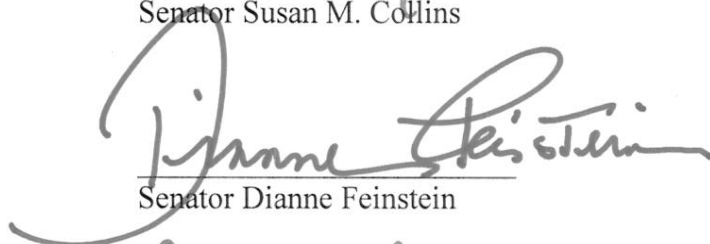

Senator Barbara Boxer


Senator Amy Klobuchar

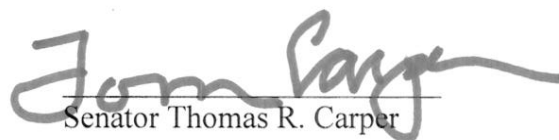

Senator Sheldon Whitehouse


Senator Debbie Stabenow


Senator Susan M. Collins

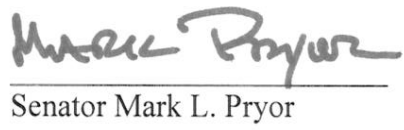

Senator Dianne Feinstein


Senator Bill Nelson


Senator Thomas R. Carper


Senator Mary Landrieu


Senator Max Baucus


Senator Mark L. Pryor